



INTERVIEWS

ALAN MOORE

DEBORAH WATLING

TERRANCE DICKS

ARKEN SWORD

45p

EDITORIAL

Thanks for picking up this zine and reading it. Let's start off with last issue and the completely negative response I got from it. Well...that's not quite fair. I got a few letters of praise and condemnation (mostly praise) but the truth of the matter is that no-one wrote giving their comprehensive views on the subject of Sex & Violence. Thanks a lot. (That should be read with a sarcastic tone of mind.)

The ONLY response of some importance was from my Poly (Coventry) which banned it because it was against Union Policy! They said (and this be no lie) that the 1-page strip Dream-Lover implied that all wives are monsters. You've gotta love ain't'cha? This has meant I had to remove all copies from campus, and ARK was never to be printed by the Union Printers again. (The hypocrites printed it in the first place...they don't mind having my money do they?) Still, I'm not at all depressed because the people who banned it are no longer holding any position in the Student's Union, and I've got a better printer. (I hope! How does it look?)

I apologise for the error in page numbering last issue. Pages 17 and 18 should be the other way around.

Still on last issue, the biggest complaint I've had was from those of you who want to get rid of text stories in ARK. That is exactly what I'm doing to see whether it is the opinion of you all or not. This means that the stories I do have will be forwarded to other zines otherwise it is unfair to the writers (who have waited a long time anyway!) This will make way for more articles.

This issue is another hotch-potch of strips, articles and interviews that, hopefully, will cater for all tastes. First, the fan contributors. Geoff Cotterill is an amazing person, as well as having a name I always spell wrong. Last year we met, discuss things we like, bumped into each other time and time again, and got articles together. Now, by complete fluke, all three of his articles see print in the one issue. Please accept a freebie issue, Geoff, and many thanks.

The same goes to Sean O'Sullivan, his efforts really do live up to his initials, and he's got many an editor out of a tight spot I know. He's been so prolific in fact that I've been handing out his illos to all and sundry. I think that his title logos are great and, in recognition of this fact, I renege my statement from last issue where I said that he was "young for his age". Actually he's quite tall for his height.

There are quite a few strips this time around. I make no apology for this because they are all worth the price of printing them, and it keeps up my aim to make ARK unpredictable. (Even I don't know what's going on half the time!) If you want more of the same stuff get Dilemma 3 from me soon.

One strip I'm certainly interested in is Profane, mainly because I write it. It will be drawn by various people and will appear in several zines. Look out for it in the fan press, and don't think of it as the usual run-of-the-mill hero/villain because as the story unfolds it changes direction. Stick with it and see.

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Art Credits
 Paul Chikran: 3, 6 (bottom), 24
 Carl Critchlow: 5, 6 (top), 8
 John Jackson: 16, 21-23
 Mark Lockett: 2, 7, 13
 Sean O'Sullivan: 17, 20 (bottom)
 plus all those lovely logos
 Paul Duncan: everything else.

ARKEN SWORD

No.10 4/84

Cover by DAVID LLOYD

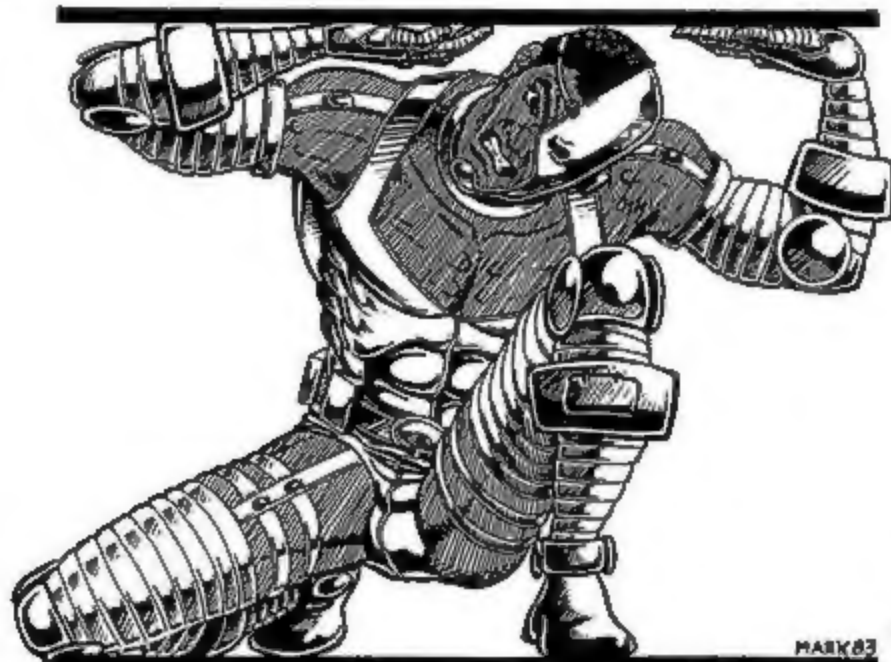
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 (70p by post) from Paul Duncan.

5 issues will cost you £3.00 and that'll get you a free copy of Dilemma 1. Copies of Arkenword 3 ad cost 75p by post each or £1.40 for both. Anyone wishing to sell this zine at shops or marts will be well treated.

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MARK 83

EDITORIAL



If you've been paying attention to this zine you'd of noticed by now that there are three interviews in it. The Terrance Dicks one is small but worth seeing I thought. Deborah Watling was kind enough to give a half-hour of her time to talk to Geoff and me. (I'd admit that I was very nervous, but there's no way anybody is going to hear it because I sound like a right prat on it.) It was good fun. Alan Moore consented to a smooth interview as well! Well blow me down. (It's the first of three parts.) What is even more amazing is that I got a cover from David Lloyd. Is my perpetual damn that I call living and breathing I had completely forgotten to do a cover. Dave came to my rescue inside days. My heart-felt thanks to Dave, Alan, Deborah, Terrance and indeed, to all those who have helped me put this together.

Now to the more down-to-Earth day-to-day part of the zine. This issue has a new price of 45p+25p(P&P). The change of price comes because of the cheaper printers and, mainly, because I want to get rid of more copies. This also means that all existing subbers that have enough money with me will get an extra issue. The new sub rate is £3.00 for 5 issues. What is even better is that with this sub you get a copy of DILEMMA ONE absolutely free! I have to get rid of back issues somehow and this seems the best way. I explore all of you to sub to ANK because without subbers I can't really continue. Let me explain the situation a little better so that you can understand what goes on.

The number of people cutting to ANK as I type this is exactly 20. This means that every time a new issue comes out only 20 people get them straight away. I have a print run of 300. 50 issues get shifted straight away with zine-wags, freebies and friends I know. A further 50 go to shops around the country. With ads, reviews etc I get rid of another 50 or so. That is about 2-3 months after the issue came out. Once help shift another 30 or so. That leaves me with 100 unsold issues at least. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that I need subbers, and only YOU can help me.

Look at this issue...are you entertained by it? Does it look good? Have nice art? Can you actually read the words? Are the subjects chosen interesting? Compare this with other zines for price and content and then tell me what you think. I would appreciate it.

Notes: Issues 1-7 of ANK are sold out... thanks to HJ Graphics for the print job... if the Birmingham One is still on I'll be there (at the zine table of course)...so come along and say hello...I'll also be at Blackpool on May 11-13 with lots of Doctor Who fans...Dilemma 3 is AS, has a free A3 poster by Martin Forrest and work in comic strip, and page-art form by Harwood, Jackson Stargrove, Chikra, Lowther, and by many more...so get it!...all the zines I never had space to review, I will soon...and with that I say goodbye,

Paul.

SATURDAY NIGHT SCIENCE FICTION

"It was discovered that there is a younger and very influential Radio 4 audience which the BBC didn't really expect. They imagined that the audience was an aging audience and Hitch-Hiker proved that was not the case if the right programme were put on."

JAMES FOLLETT.

It is not hard to imagine the surprise that went round the BBC's programme planners when they discovered that the youth of today was actually interested in listening to more than just a constant diet of pop and rock music on their radio sets. It explains, of course, the sudden boom in science fiction and fantasy related series broadcast by Radio 4 in the past few years. Previously, there had been adaptations of such classics as the *JUPITER TRILLOGY* but it was not until the success of *Hitch-Hiker* that radio really saw science fiction as a way to attract a more youthful audience. While BBC TV soldiered on with *Dr. Who* and *Blake's Seven* as well as a host of banal American programmes, BBC Radio gave us *Earthsearch* (which according to its author James Follett virtually revitalised the radio serial), an amazingly faithful if rather stodgy adaptation of *Lord of the Rings*, a spoof story of the same story *Horde of the Thangs*, and perhaps most important of all, a set of adaptations of famous Science Fiction works in the Saturday Night Theatre slot.

For a particular genre to be given its own series as part of this prestigious programme is rare enough but the amount of pre-publicity it was afforded (including a Radio Times cover) was unheard of. It is interesting to speculate whether the series, like *Earthsearch*, had a secondary motive of introducing Science Fiction to an audience which had never really encountered it. Certainly, the choice of producer would seem to bear out this theory. Glyn Dearman had previously produced *Earthsearch* and although not a Science Fiction fan by any means, he enjoys a 'good story'. The test he applied was not whether he understood the ideas but whether they were logical. The five stories chosen for production reflected this viewpoint exactly.

The series' hook was to trace the development of science fiction from the turn of the century through to the present day. Only one author then could be chosen to start the series and sure enough H. G. Wells' *The First Men In The Moon* was broadcast in January 1988. However, despite a strong cast featuring Hywel Bennett and William Shatner the play was not particularly successful. Terry Jones' adaptation had too much of an air of the talking book about it. Most radio plays do have a narrator in order to put across the visual portions of the story, but somehow this production went too far. It consisted of large chunks of Wells' narration interspersed with dramatized dialogue. Whilst talking books can be very interesting, by falling between two stools, *First Men In The Moon* became rather boring. This was coupled with a feeling that the writer and cast were indulging in the ultimate sin of sending it up. William Shatner's performance as Cavor had more than a touch of Lionel Jeffries' version in the movie adaptation. Whilst it is true to say that the science fiction elements of Wells' book are now dated, the social commentary, which is the core of the book, is still as relevant as it was at the turn of the century and deserving of better treatment.

The second production of the series was something of an oddity, being a sequel to the 1950's radio serials, *Journey Into Space*. Charles Chilton's stories of *Jet Rognes* and the crew of the *Discovery* were the equivalent of *Doctor Who* today, capturing the imagination of both adults and children by their verve and inventiveness. However this new version, despite being written by Chilton, succeeded only in proving how far dramatized science fiction has advanced in the past twenty-five years. Full of dialogue like: "Careful, Jet, be sure you're safely hitched" and with a view of space verging positively on the medieval, the story is reminiscent of the *W.R. Johns Kings Of Space* series but not half as imaginative. Briefly, *The Return From Mars*, the title of this play, tells of the adventures of *Jet* and his crew immediately after the third and last serial. On a trip from Mars to Earth, the *Discovery* slips through a time warp and they find themselves far in the

Earth's future where the planet is slowly dying as a result of some mysterious holocaust. With the *Discovery* severely damaged, there seems little chance of the crew returning home. Children of the Fifties who remember the original *Journey Into Space* say that *The Return From Mars* is a very poor representation of the original. It is probably too much to hope that the BBC will repeat those first three serials so we can judge for ourselves.

After two days, the series returned to adapting literary works, turning its sights on John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*. This adaptation, by Barbara Clegg, who recently wrote the *Doctor Who* story *Earthshock*, was first class in every way. Strangely enough it was the only one in the series not to be directed by Glyn Dearman. Although extremely faithful to the original novel, it stands on its own as a science fiction play. Like *The Return From Mars*, *The Chrysalids* depicts a post-holocaust civilization; unlike the *Return*, it does so with absolute conviction. From beginning to end, here is a world so instantly recognisable as to be positively terrifying. The concept of a world where a religion, in this case Christianity, has been twisted by a handful of bigots immediately calls to mind such groups as *The Survivalists* in America who are actively preparing for a nuclear war as a sign of God's wrath instead of working to prevent it. The fear of the children as they discover their telepathic abilities is put across very well and if the production seems slightly too cosy, then that is just as much a fault of the original novel.

Andrew Lynch adapted Arthur C. Clarke's *A Fall Of Moondust* as the fourth play in the series and succeeded in possibly improving on the original. Clarke may have inaugurated the disaster novel with this book but it does tend to be rather long-winded. The adaptation however, moves along at a cracking pace with a cast consisting of Barry Foster, David Buck and Richard Pearson, all of whom give sterling performances. Whilst the actual rescue of the *Selene* is accomplished rather too easily to evoke much tension, the early parts of the play, as the search is conducted for the missing ship, carry the necessary ring of authenticity. As with *The Chrysalids* the major flaw lies not with the adaptation but with the source novel: Clarke's genius does not lie in characterisation but in extrapolating technological trends. Captain Harris and everyone else are more akin to chess pieces moved around as the author requires rather than real people reacting in a realistic fashion.

The last story of the series, however, had been saved for last as we were treated to a magnificent adaptation of *The Technicolor Time Machine*. Harry Harrison's hilarious story of a movie studio which dabbles in time travel as a means of cost-cutting on its historical epics, and of all the ensuing complications, was turned into a comic drama by Chris Boucher. The story is eminently suitable to the medium of radio, stretching the imagination and using sound and dialogue to create effects which would cost millions of pounds to create on screen. Despite the comic overtones however, the plot makes perfect sense exploring the paradoxes of time travelling in great but entertaining detail. The characters too are delightfully drawn, particularly Barney Henderson who discovers that he is merely mediocre as a film director and L.M. Crossman whose method of making a historical film is described thus: "We got this Viking. We call him Denny or Carl or some other good Viking name and you do a saga of his adventures like one day fighting and winning. Of course he's restless, he's that kind. He goes off and finds America then comes back and says 'I have found America' so they make him the King." One is forced to ask whether L.M. had a hand in Crosswell. Richard Pearson pops up again as Professor Hewitt turning in a superb performance as the archtypical absent-minded professor who has invented a time machine in his front room. The pace never lets up for a moment. Barely a moment goes by without some new revelation being expertly sprung on both the audience and the unsuspecting Barney. A perfect piece of text dramatic writing with barely a moment wasted, *Time Machine* is probably the best adaptation of a science fiction story into another medium that I have ever come across.

Having found their feet with the last three productions, it is a shame that the series had to come to an end. Similar adaptations of Blisk's *Cities In Flight* series, Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud*, and at the very least something by Heinlein would have been most welcome. What the series showed was that dramatic science fiction could be done and done well. In the cinema, only *Blade Runner* has come even close to demonstrating that fact. It is to be hoped that BBC radio keeps on flying the flag.

Written by Geoff Ottorill



FANZINES

I review every fanzine I get, whether they be swapped, bought or nicced. It would be nice if all these fanzines reviewed Arkenword and/or Illusions.

I urge all you prospective buyers of fanzines to buy up back issues as well as the numbers mentioned in the following reviews. Fandom needs support in every way.

The prices of the fanzines do not include postage unless otherwise stated.

Escape 3 from Escape Publishing.

88 A5 pgs for 95p. Although this is not my cup of tea I still find pleasure in reading it. A lot of hard work went into this and it shows.

Pulp One from Mark Lockett.

8 A5 pgs for 10p. Excellent little stripaine. It isn't funny but it'll bring a smile to your face.

Original Light 2 from Matt Ginn.

39

A5 pgs for 40p. Large improvement on No. 1. It has enthusiasm pouring out of it and it'll go far with a few changes.



Fanzine Fanatics from Keith & Rosemary Walker, 8 Vine St, A4 sides for trade only. This reviews aines.

Fusion 1 from Hugh Campbell,

16 A5 pgs for 30p. The writing is entertaining & thought provoking. The art is fairly bad. Good aine though.

Weird Scenes 2 from Alec Chalmers.

PH3 OBG, 32 A4 pgs for 50p. This is improving but the strips need more care. The one-page illos are good and well worth getting.

Unearthly Children 1 from Mo Jones.

20 A4 pgs for 30p. Excellent aine for media people, with some good art from Paul Chokran. It's good value for money as well.

Ratman 3 from Barbara Georgiou.

16 A5 pgs for 20p. All 3 for 60p by post. This issue has superior art to the others and the story is pretty good too. It's worth your while to get all three.

RAMPAGE MONTHLY.

When looking through Rampage Monthly I was surprised at the high standard of contents that was maintained throughout its run. Barely an issue passed without a Byrne, or Perez, or Simonson, or Rahms, or Colan, or Infantino comic strip gracing its pages.

Originally it was dressed-up as a rip-roaring, savage, mountain-climbing rag that promised destruction as a main course. This was mainly served up as the inclusion of lengthy Hulk stories drawn by Walt Simonson and Alfredo Alcala. These were concerned with 'untold' tales of the Hulk's early career. In a nutshell he meets Beret, who proceeds to explain that she is, in fact, a fugitive from the war-like planet of Krypton. Essentially she has come to warn the Earth of the on-coming invasion fleet, and of course she wants to help with her Spatial Distorter. This spatial distorter is really nothing more than a hand-bag that carries things invariably larger than the bag. A two-bit Tardis then (or even the inspiration for the Pandora series that Howard Stangroom writes?) So whenever trouble brews, Beret dips into her bag and extracts one of her creations that she made as a techno-artist(?) It's just broken really, but nice all the same. I think I should mention that the art is very good, and executed using a charcoal affect. The issues produced by this team are 1-3, and 5.

My favourite of the bunch was the Metal-Master epic in No.3. Beret, Rick Jones and the Hulk get caught inside the spatial distorter while it is under the evil control of the Metal Master. This means that all the gadgets become deadly, hunting out the trio. Great stuff!!

Number four was a weird issue as far as the Hulk was concerned. A Starlin/Mino doodle in which good ol' green-skinned looks as though he's aged a few decades due to the quirky Mino style. The story (by Starlin) was even worse, with nothing but clichés. The saving grace was the Starlin cover which, as usual, had absolutely nothing to do with the story.

Keith Pollard tried issues 6 & 7. The first one was passable under the ink of Tony DeZuniga, but Jim Mooney's ink in the following issue was the pits. Yuck!! Trips, in Number 8, with Alcala ink was surprisingly good. This bodes well for Alcala because sometime how had the artist whenever Alcala ink it it always comes out good (but unfortunately he smoothes the style of good pencilers.) Sal Buscema next...the least said the better. Thank goodness he only lasted the one issue. It provided the reappearance of the original Avengers so maybe I can bear it in my own collection.

Ron Wilson has been shunned, I would say, by the normal comic fan because of his style. It's completely out of proportion in many cases and his scenes leave a lot to be desired. This has mainly been the fault of Chic Stone, who inked Ron in Marvel Two-in-One. However in this monthly there's a change of ink virtually every issue. The tone of the stories change too, being more concerned with the emotional side of the Hulk, a la the TV series. This works well in many cases. But back to the art. Lasting from 12-22 the inkers as the Hulk made the art worthwhile, and it really came alive during the fights. Full-page splashes were the order of the day, a theme carried over from Simonson's stint.

The last two issues were gone. Gene Colan has been one of my favourite artists, from Daredevil to Dracula, a la the TV series and so on. I think the fascination in his art lies in his lack of conformity. When a stance is shown, only parts of the figure are shown. It looks unearthly, demonic. Anyway, the story 'Mindgames' is different, and unusual due to the realistic scripting of Doug Moench (who was the only stable piece of the creative team producing the Hulk stories.)

Nova: a teenager suddenly transformed into a galactic hero. A premise that should be exciting. It wasn't. It perked up a bit when Infantino/Palmer took over the art chores, I'll admit. Lovely, flowing art. I love it. Yellow Claw trying to wipe the Apple off the map with a tidal wave while Rick Spider's father is in jail. The family think Richard is an irresponsible young lout. Tapers boil. Conflict. All good stuff y'know.

The Defenders were also carried over with Nova from the weekly version. Sal Buscema art, but it is saved to a certain extent by the ink of Klaus Janson. I told you what I thought of this strip in Arkensword 8 so refer to that if you can stand to read about them again.

Dr Strange replaced Nova from No. 7, under the reins of the Englehart/Colan/Palmer team, who went on until No.12, where Alfredo Alcala took over for an issue (not too bad either). Rudy Nebres guested during issues 14 & 15, as well as 20 & 21. In between Craig Russell showed us all how to draw alien landscapes properly, while relying heavily on very stylish figures and actions to convey emotions. When copied from photos or models I find his figures breathtaking, but the 'stick figure' method he uses puts me off completely. Another Starlin doodling session for the next story and then a Clea short (a reprint from The Avengers Weekly) and this closed the good doctors account. Overall, very good and well worth picking up for those holes in your collection.

Number 8 of Rampage Monthly was a monstrous issue for it introduced us to the NEW X-MEN, which means we get closer of the originals, right? Wrong!! It seems silly for me to continue and say more about the X-men when everybody I know knows everything about them. All right so there's Cockburn, DeZuniga, and Byrne adapting Claremont's scripts to a visual form that's elevated these teen-agers (or thereabouts) to cult status. Busteller. Get Cerebro if you want to know more 'cos people are going to complain if I forget about Bert's image transformer, or Popeye and the Phantom Stranger appearing in panels, if I did an article on them (which I'm not going to do!)

Number 25 tells us that Luke Cage, Powerman, Hero for Hire was transformed into a tough, bullet-proof crime fighter by Dr. Dumaine while Cage was serving time at a state penitentiary. Anyway his story is full of tragedy but the real clincher, the question that everyone asks, is: where does he get those chains with big links on? Now come on, comics are a serious business & these sort of things have to be explained. Actually the art, executed on occasion by George Tuska or Billy Graham, was full of ink and tone but it wasn't exciting. The strip lasted up until no. 30 where it faded out due to lack of interest.



The Thing has always been a popular character in the Fantastic Four because of his attitude to life and his 'affliction'. It gets boring when, for the 1000th time, he sulks about Alice Masters not liking him because of his looks i.e. their relationship is on the rocks. Rampage reprinted the Marvel Two-in-One stories for a while including team-ups with The Thing (from his past), Warlock, Doc Savage, The Avengers, Deathlok, Impossible Man (a good one this), Starhawk, Stingray and a particular one in no.38 where Frank Miller pencilled one of the more memorable stories... (I wonder how long it'll take for Marvel to reprint this story, Miller's John Carter one-off, and his Captain Marvel one-off in a special edition?)

Number 40 saw the start of the all-new Timeswaster strip by Paul Neary & Mick Austin. It's quite complicated for a four-part story and with the amount of publicity it got I expected more (in terms of page count). 18 pages over 4 months is not exactly swamping the public is it? Although some of the moments were okay and the art was suitably vague this was nothing but an excuse for Merlin to change things about a bit. Nos. 42-44 contained the last three instalments, with Alan Davis supplying the brilliant 'Crusader' 3-pager (with a little help from Paul Neary). It cameps Batman's origin and gives us a more realistic view of what superheroing is all about. (It was reprinted recently in The Daredevils by the by.)

Iron Fist joined the crew from number 45 onwards to fill up the pages left by Timeswaster's disappearance. John Byrne art and Chris Claremont writing is a good combination, though it was a wee bit confusing coming in halfway through the story. Marvel UK were obviously employing all the tricks of the trade by putting in TWO John Byrne strips in entire sales. Unfortunately this Iron Fist stint only lasted up to number 50 where it moved on to Marvel Superheroes. These Marvel UK guys and gals are daft shifting everything around & spoiling the stories. To make it worse they expect us to fork out 60p...sorry 65p for a 52 page monthly. Cutting down the quantity of titles and maintaining the quality is the answer. This means putting in as much British stuff as needed, since we invariably produce better strips. Alan Moore, Alan Davis, Mick Austin, Jerry Paris, Steve Dillon, John Higgins, Leigh, Dicky Howett, Tim Quinn, Steve Moore and others all do stuff for Marvel UK at the moment so why on Earth don't they make use of them (besides the money problem)?

Rampage survived almost 5 years of chopping and changing. I used to say 'Why on Earth don't Marvel put it out of its misery?' They have, at last, and I for one don't regret its passing.

Written by Paul Duncan



SP Spectrum 2 from Wieslaw Tusulka.

35 A5 pages (plus 8 A5 page horror zine) for 50p. Well worth it (and I'm not just saying that because I've got some art in it!) The printing is a bit dodgy in places, but if you like a few short stories and a bit of fun I recommend it.

Comicworld 5 from the same address as above. 24 A5 pages (plus 8 A5 pages in 'The Twilight Zone' and 16 A5 pages in 'The X-Fans Special') for 50p. The normal zine contains news, letters, a column and lots of other bits and pieces, made all the more enjoyable by Sean O'Sullivan's illos and logos. The 2 specials are interesting and occasionally funny. Again the printing lets it down in places.

Comicworld Handbook 1 from the same address yet again. 16 A5 pages for 25p. This is essential to all comic fans. It deals with the Comics Code Authority and gives a rundown on some important features of the code. Get it!

Absolute Comics 13 from Douglas Angel.

24 A5 pgs for 50p. Last issue I'm afraid. Full of stuff by John Jackson, & has the conclusion of PAS. It is a good zine.

Comixine 7 from Howard Stangroom.

32 A5 pgs for 65p by post. An impressive list of contributors. Two of the best articles on comics on show, and some nice art.

Mad Dog 8 from 'The Office'.

32 A4 pgs for 50p. Extremely high class printing. I feel too much work has gone into this. In future I hope the creators lay out the strips better, and cut out all the clap-trap.

That's Really Zen... from the same address as above. 28 A5 pgs for 20p. A stripzine full of odd-looking things that range from crap to good.

Brenda from Helen McCallum.

16 A5 pages for 25p. This is a skit on the girl comic/magazine and is witty, funny and full of originality. Probably the most unusual zine I've seen.

Worlds Collide 10 from Martin Skidmore.

28 A4 pages for 45p. The printing is a bit naff this issue, with smudges here and there, but still it has the variety of talent & opinion to make it worthwhile. Probably the best zine solely devoted to comics.

TV Superhero 8 from Stephen Nottingham.

100 pages plus cardboard covers with colour photo for £1.30 by post. (I think!) Again, I have to mention that it's about the Hulk & \$8m men etc. Interesting stories and photos with articles as well. I don't know how well it sells, but it should. It's actually good.

Fantasy Advertiser 82 from Martin Lock.

44 A4 pages for 40p by post. This is improving with every issue. I dislike the ever-increasing number of columns, but how can I slag off a zine that compliments me as an editor? (creep, creep!)

Crime 5 from Alan Gaulton.

24 A5 pages for 40p. Despite inferior art this stripzine is still very readable. (The Eddie Campbell completists can get it for the poster.)

Yellow Dwarf 3 from Andrew Briggs.

28 A5 pages (plus 16 A6 page stripzine) for 60p by post. Reviews of books, radio, TV and films with short stories, strips, poetry, competitions, fanzines and letters. A lively and entertaining read.

Spokeway 35 from Richard Ashford.

24 A4 pages for 50p by post. Much, much better layout, design and overall quality. Contains news of all upcoming comics in Britain and the US (as well as a nifty interview with Walter Simonsen.)



TERRANCE DICKS

A MINI INTERVIEW.

Terrance Dicks is a writer who has been active in many fields since the 1960's. He has written radio plays, two radio comedy series and episodes of *The Avengers*, and *Space 1999*. He has both written for and, for five years, script-edited the longrunning *Doctor Who*, after which he script-edited a short-lived but marvellous programme called *Monsters 3*. He has written books for children, including many of the Target Books 'Doctor Who' Series, and for the past few years he has been script-editor of 'The BBC Sunday Classic Serial', whose next production at the time of writing is to be 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' starring Tom Baker as Sherlock Holmes & Terence Rigby as Doctor Watson. On behalf of *AMERICAN*, I would like to thank Terrance for agreeing to take time out of his busy schedule to give necessarily brief answers to a long list of questions.

Geoff Cotterill.

My first question was the obvious one as to Terrance's first contact with the canon. "I suppose as a reader, aged about eleven, since when I've always been an admirer of Holmes." The Hound is, of course, the most filmed story & so, it might have been expected that this production would have been influenced to some extent by previous versions. Terrance doesn't agree. He comments that very few of the earlier versions have been faithful to the original. Even the best of them, the Basil Rathbone classic, was changed quite extensively.

Authenticity seems to be the watchword of this production as, indeed, it is for all Sunday Classics. "Naturally we recorded the interiors in the studio, but the exteriors were done on authentic Dartmoor locations, which necessitated night shooting in conditions of icy cold." Another aspect of this authenticity has been in the portrayal of Holmes and Watson. "They have been portrayed exactly as Conan Doyle wrote them and both Tom Baker & Terence Rigby are excellent in their respective roles."

Michael Hardwick once commented that in his experience, script-editors are treated as the lowest of the low and I wondered whether Terrance had any comments on this. "Script Editing is what you make it! No-one treats me as the lowest of the low - I'd like to see them try!" Following on from this, Terrance explained what exactly the job involved. For example, who chooses the titles to adapt? "Barry Letts, the producer, and I do. In fact, choosing the book is a very important part of the job and often the hardest. And there are differences between different series. For instance, editing the Classic Serial is, on the whole, simpler than editing 'Doctor Who', but then, anything is easier than 'Doctor Who'!"

The last version of the Hound by the BBC was made in 1968 and although roughly the same length as this production - just under two hours - it was a two-part story. Many felt at the time that this prevented the necessary build-up of tension. Did Terrance feel that the four-part format was a handicap? "Not really, the original story is essentially a short novel, and as such, it made a natural four-parter." My next question related to the time-slot given to this new version. The last Hound was

broadcast at 9.00PM; is Sunday teatime really a suitable time for such a potentially horrific tale? "I think that standards have changed and viewers are unlikely to be affected by such things. However, in addition to this, you must remember that we are going for a more authentic, less 'Master Horror', approach".

Terrance was, naturally, quite reticent about the title role, but was more forthcoming about the names involved. Aside from Tom Baker, Terence Rigby and Terrance Dicks, the other main members of the production were Barry Letts, the Producer and Peter Duguid, the Director. In studying that list, it is immediately obvious that three of those people have strong links with another BBC TV series: 'Doctor Who'. Terrance was script editor, Tom played the title role for seven years, while not only was Barry Letts producer at the same time as Terrance script edited and executive producer for the 1980-81 series, but it was also he who cast Tom Baker as the mysterious time traveller in the first place.

Moreover, many members of the 'Doctor Who' production team are Holmes devotees: Anthony Read, John Nathan Turner and Robert Holmes; Tom Baker did a Holmesian impersonation in 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang' and many Dr. Who fans are also 'Sherlockians' as well. Is this just co-incidence?

"I think many people who like Sherlock Holmes like 'Doctor Who' as well. There are many similarities between the two characters: both are intelligent but tinged with arrogance and a certain humour; they are tenacious & courageous with a fatal curiosity. I think all the Doctors have been Holmesian to some degree, especially the first. The roots of the two characters are also somewhat similar. Television is widely regarded as an ephemeral medium while at the time, the 'Strand Magazine' was seen as junk literature. What we are after is real excellence in popular entertainment and that is the hardest thing to do. As for Tom's casting as Holmes, it was really a matter of two things: firstly, Tom has always wanted to play the part, and secondly, he is in many ways a natural for the role."

Looking ahead, were there any possibilities of further Holmes dramatizations? "Depending on the success of 'Hound', some sort of spin-off may be a possibility, though probably not on the Classic Serial. In the meantime, we have 'Beau Geste', 'Jane Eyre' and 'Dombey and Son' all in the pipeline."

And what does the future hold for Terrance? "Well, I have had an adult novel planned for some time but I'm afraid that the BBC, the Doctor Who books and four other series of children's books keep getting in the way."

By now you will have been able to gain your own views on this new 'Hound of the Baskervilles' but whatever the final verdict, I'm sure we will be grateful to Terrance Dicks and all the other members of the cast and crew for making it a reality.

edk



THERE I WAS, JUST MINDING
ME OWN BUSINESS, LOOKING
FOR A PLACE TO PARK MESELF
FOR THE NIGHT... OH, BUT
BEFORE I START THIS STORY
I'M MIKE SMITH, FORMER BOXER,



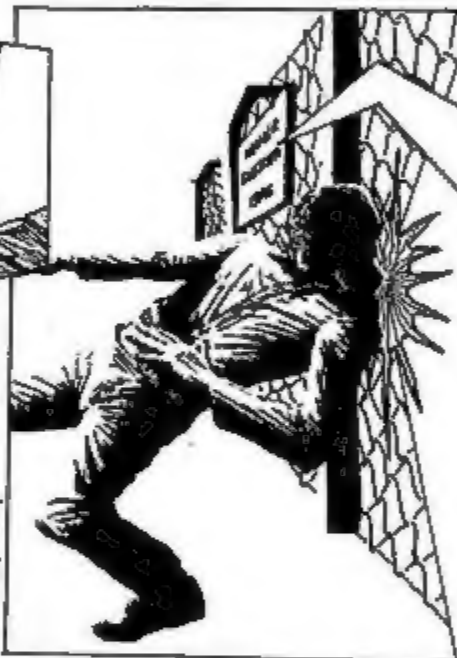
FORMER THUG... WELL, LOOK
UP ME RECORD IF Y'WANT TO
KNOW THE FACTS... BUT
Y'GET THE PICTURE!

AT THE MO' I'M MORE
A "MAN OF LEISURE" YOU COULD



SKY, BUT LET'S GET BACK TO
THE STORY...

IT WAS PARKY THAT NIGHT.
LOTS OF "SILVER FOAM FLOATING
INTO THE NIGHT AIR". I AIN'T
ILLITERATE Y'SEE?



I WEREN'T FRAID!

ALL THIS MONEY THEY
SPEND ON SECURITY AN' ALL,
AND SOME BUGGER GOES
AN' FORGETS TO PUT IT ON.
CAN'T BE BAD I THOUGHT,
SO LIKE A FOOL I GO AN'
PLOD IN THERE.



ANYWAY THAT
NIGHT I WAS
DOIN' THE
ROUNDS WHEN
I SAW THIS GREAT
OPPORTUNITY TO
HAVE A HIGH TIME
OF IT.

I WAS LUCKY



IT WEREN'T THE SORT OF THING I EXPECTED.





GOD! I USED TO DO A BIT OF DUFFING-UP
IN MY TIME, BUT THIS... PEOPLE WERE DEAD!



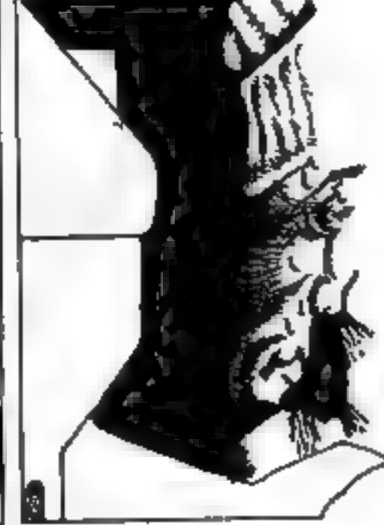
I WAS READY
TO RUN WHEN I
SAW THOSE LITTLE
"DOLLOPS OF
HAPPINESS". HEH,
HEH, THERE I GO
AGAIN. WELL, CAN'T
BLAME ME FOR
THINKING IT CAN YOU?
ME, I GOT MY
PRIORITIES RIGHT. IF

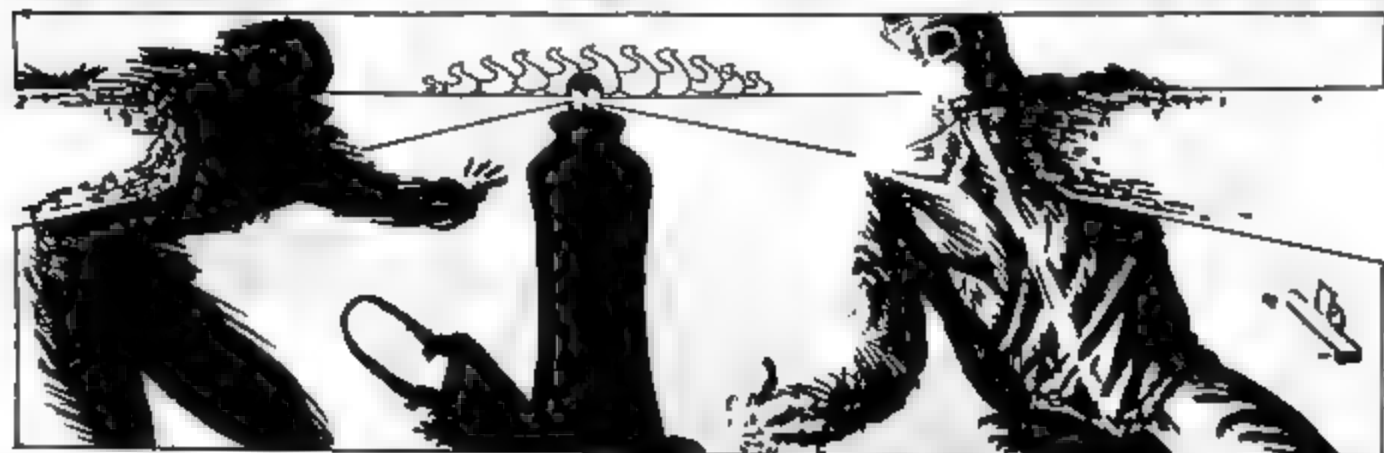
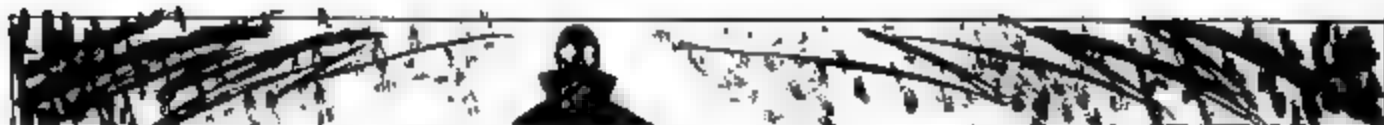


THERE'S KILLING,
AN' ME WITH THE
LOLLY AND A
RECORD, WELL THE
FLIZZ AIN'T EXACTLY
GON' TO GIVE ME
THE BENEFIT OF
THE DOUBT ARE
THEY? HA, AN' PK'S
ARE GREAT ANIMATORS
TOO!



SO I START TO SCARPER...
.... RIGHT INTO TROUBLE!





IT WAS THEN I
REALISED THAT THIS...THIS
SHADOW KNEW I WASN'T
INVOLVED, AN' HE JUST
DISAPPEARED. I AIN'T
SEEN NOTHING LIKE IT!

ANYHOW THE FUZZ GOT IN ON
THE ACT AN' THEY GAVE ME THE
ONCE-OVER, SEVERAL TIMES.
I WAS SHOOK UP, BUT THE
THOUGHT OF WHAT HAPPENED
HURT MORE THAN THE PHYSICAL
PAIN.

AT LEAST ONE GOOD THING
CAME OUT OF THIS...

...I GOT A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT!!



ALAN MOORE

PART ONE

This interview was conducted by post, to allow Alan to answer the questions carefully. I didn't want to include all the basic questions that us fans always include, so for that get Fantasy Express 5 (from Lew Stringer

for 70p by post) which is probably the best interview with Alan I've seen so far.

Alan Moore is probably the most respected comic writer on this side of the Atlantic, and no doubt, with his writing on DC's Swamp Thing, he'll be elevated to mega-star status in no time whatsoever.

Having started doodling and writing from childhood Alan broke into the field via his Roscoe Moscov strip for the music paper, Sounds. This was a satirical (i.e. funny) look at private eye's, pop, nuclear war, aliens, fascism and a million and one other everyday topics. Unusual as it may seem to us now, Alan drew as well as wrote the strip. This led onto The Star's My Degradation, a tangle-up of the dubious talents of Alan and Pedro Henry. This also appeared in Sounds.

Meanwhile, short strips written by Alan and drawn by David Lloyd were being printed in the back of Doctor Who Weekly. More Moore followed in Star Wars Monthly with art by such talents as Adolfo Ruylla, John Stokes and newcomer Alan Davis.

One thing led to another and Alan Moore has gone on to write Captain Britain for Marvel UK, Skizz and D.H. A Quinch for 2000A.D., V for Vendetta, Marvelman, and The Boefiries Saga for Warrior, and most recently Swamp Thing for DC Comics. Not only that but he also does Maxwell the Cat for his local newspaper The Northants Post. Not bad for an ex-toilet cleaner!

There are many characteristics that make up an Alan Moore story: the comedy, the drama, the epic proportions, the human insight, and the charm with which they are told. Alan uses all the old clichés in comics that he has grown up with and twists them until they turn into believable stories. He's quite good really.

Paul Duncan.

P: What started you reading comics, & which were your favourites?

A: When I was a tangle-haired tot back in the '50's, comics were something that all children got (like Rikets and head lice). It was part of the established working-class tradition that when Mothers got sick of their yammering offspring they would pacify them with a copy of the Topper or Beaser or Dandy, Nowadays, of course, they'd probably just give them half a bottle of Pennigan or a valium crushed up in Ribena, but things were more primitive in those misty, Servis-advert times.

It's difficult to say which ones I actually liked best back then, because I'm one of those horrible pathetic people who always pretend that they had much better taste than they actually did. The sort of person you find at parties saying "Oh yeah, when I was five I was really heavily into B.B. King and Bo Diddley." Anyway, as far as comics go, I know I used to like Jonah and the stuff that Ken Reid did, along with the things by Baumhals and Davy Law. I also had a soft spot for those really quaint things like "Jimmy's Magic Patch"...the serious side of Dudley Watkins artwork.

Series that I remember as being particularly enjoyable include things like "The Purple Cloud" and "The Jelly Men" which were either in the Dandy or the Beaser. You'd have to ask Lew Stringer for the precise details, a man so dedicated to British comics that he's had plastic surgery to look like the Mekon. As I recall, the Jelly Men were particularly strange: sort of pink, semi-humanoid octopus-things that wandered around blowing unbreakable bubbles. I know this doesn't sound terribly exciting, and I'm sure they did lots of other stuff as well, but I only remember the bubbles.

Then there was the Black Sapper, a strange proto-super-villain who had a burrowing craft called the Earthworm. As far as I can recall, his main plan was to steal the Crown Jewels by burrowing into the Tower of London. This, to me, provided one of the many intriguing hooks in the series. Why on earth was he going to burrow into the Tower of London? Weren't the jewels kept upstairs, anyway? How was he going to burrow upwards through several floors to reach them? Why didn't somebody just follow one of the bloody great gaping tunnels that he left everywhere and just, I dunno, shoot him or something? What the hell was a Sapper, anyway? Questions, questions, questions, flooding through the mind of the alert young lad of yesteryear.

Less intellectually demanding was a strip called something like "Showboat Circus" that used to appear in the Buzzer or thereabouts. The appeal of this strip was also simple to define: A nice year old Circus sharpshooter called Kitty who wore an adorable little fringed buckskin frock and kept getting tied to chairs by the villains. When I was six, this is what I had instead of sexual fantasies and video parties looking back, it's also probably the REAL reason I wrote all that stuff about sadism and bondage in The Daredevils just misplaced guilt at my early adoration for this perpetually plighted nymphette. Ahh Kitty - why didn't you wait for me? You and that little bitch Hayley Mills...

In about 1960, aged 7, I discovered one of the early issues of The Flash and a couple of Batman/Detective comics at a market book stall and my long downhill slide towards comic junkies began in earnest, culminating in the tragic man you see before you today.

P: When you were a child did you have any aspirations to be a comic book writer?

A: Yeah, I suppose I did... or rather, I wanted to draw and write them, even though I don't suppose that at that point it had actually crossed my mind that there were actually real people who drew and wrote comics as part of their everyday lives.

If all the readers of whichever of your 'zines this eventually appears in will swear upon an anathema full of bibles never to reveal the following to a living soul, I suppose I could come clean once and for all and tell you about "The Omega Comics Group", but I'm sure I'll regret it.

What it was, basically, was me turning out a vast number of ten page comics drawn in coloured biro on those horrible coarse Woolworths jotters with a little girl with a Mob-cap on the front. These included such breathtaking concepts and characters as "The Crimebusters", a rip-off of the Avengers that featured Meteor Man, (who could fly and had a gun that shot little meteors out of the barrel), Ray Gun, (whose secret identity was Raymond Gunn), and Jack O'Lanterns and his female partner, The Sprite, (The Sprite stalked up with the Wasp... but then, who isn't these days?) As I'm sure the discerning reader will notice, my widely acclaimed sense of gritty realism coupled with dazzling concepts was clearly visible even then.

What I used to do was loan these out to my classmates at a penny a time, beat up the ones who refused, and send the proceeds to the Save The Children Fund. After about a year's worth of issues I had something like three shillings and fourpence to contribute, which would go towards buying Sony Walkman units for unfortunate in the Third World. In fact, there's probably a guerrilla leader out there now who owes his continued survival to The Omega Comics Group. I just hope that when him and his buddies come over here and start eating our women and sleeping with our food that he remembers who his friends are, that's all.

I suppose the reason I was really doing all this was to impress Janet Bentley, a pre-teen goddess who sat in the desk in front of mine. Actually, all I did was succeed in convincing her that rather than being a fat, pimply, unlovable wretch, I was in actual fact a fat, pimply, unlovable, latent homosexual wretch who liked drawing men in skintight costumes wrestling each other. Of course, I am now a world famous celebrity with his name upon a nation's lips, and Janet Bentley is no doubt married with three obnoxious kids, a dismal job behind the cosmetics counter at Boots the Chemists and an advance case of cynititis. Tough luck Janet. You had your chance.

P: Was there any fanzine work you particularly liked, or even disliked?

A: I didn't really do that much active fanzine work, and there's precious little worth mentioning. I enjoyed doing the Shadow article in Trev Goring's 'Seminar' and a couple of other forgettable bits and bobs, but I suppose that my main enthusiasm was for David Sutton's excellent horror fanzine, 'Shadow'. I did a number of sub-Ashley Beardsley illos for him, and while I think they have a sort of inept and naive charm I doubt this quality is readily visible to anyone but myself. The thing for 'Shadow' that I remember most fondly was a long short story that I wrote for his Amateur Horror Anthology, "Weird Window". It was called 'Stripes of the Lizard', and it featured a sort of horror/sword and sorcery yarn set at the very end of life on Earth when everything is dark all the time and it just rains and rains and rains. Winding across this depressing landscape is a sort of degenerate gypsy wagon train called 'The Deathwatch', headed by an aging skeletal figure called Eng Crater. I'd just read Marvin Pekar's excellent Gorenwaght books at the time, so all the characters have names like Billy Blacklungs' and 'Toxiah Firebombs' and stuff like that. I haven't read it in years, so I've no idea if it's as tolerable as I remember it. It did, I think, win the most votes from readers and came out as favourite story in the anthology, but whether that means much I don't know.

ON FANZINES

I remember doing an article for Trev Goring's 'Seminar' fanzine during the late sixties/early seventies which dealt with the Shadow. I spent a hell of a long time gathering material, writing to the New York company who published the Shadow a paperback adventures, reading all the books and comics in my collection again for relevant information, writing to leading British Shadow aficionado Mike Kiggs and generally putting some sweat into it. I learned a lot in the process, got a halfway decent article out of it and that was great. I see too many pieces (in fanzines) these days that still together a lot of vaguely remembered facts and pieces of common knowledge in the vain hope that whatever comes out the other end will be interesting.

The only bad experience I had in fanzine was when I got involved with a disgusting little junior car salesman named David Mowck who nearly soured me on the whole idea for good with his repulsive machinations. Incidentally, if you're out there reading this Dave you've still got that Jack Dagna original that I loaned you fifteen years ago you subhuman little douchebag. One of these days you're going to hear a knock on the door and it's going to be me carrying a chainsaw and I'm going to slit your throat from lobe to lobe, you festering sack of Maryn-ridden luganome. Just thought I should mention that...

P: Roscoe Mowck, which you wrote and drew, appeared in the music paper, Sounds. Were you under pressure to include music personalities in the strip?

A: Well, no, I wasn't, but I THOUGHT I was. I was just starting out and was suffering under the naive impression that a strip in a music paper like Sounds might be required to actually be about music. Consequently I included a lot of terribly unfunny parodies of musicians that would of been better excluded. We all make mistakes, difficult as that must be to someone when dealing with a perfectly evolved entity such as myself.

P: At the end of his strip, Roscoe Mowck was returned to acorn. Will we ever see his return, or perhaps the return of characters like Mycroft the Crow?

A: Probably not, as I seem to have given up drawing more or less altogether with the exception of Maxwell the Cat, which certainly doesn't qualify as 'drawing' by anyone else's standards. In a few years time, however, when I'm a burned out has-been, I mature a fond dream of getting down to the rapidograph again, just for the crack. I always really liked Roscoe Mowck as a character, and the thought of a more conclusive "Roscoe II" did actually cross my mind when I was wrapping up the last epic 'Stars' strip. Mycroft the Crow is another character I'd like to do more with, because I always used to think he was really frightening & funny at the same time. I had an idea in the planning stages for a Mycroft solo strip to appear in an underground title somewhere, but like most of the above stuff it's been more or less abandoned until I reach the illusory future point in my career where I can relax a bit and do some things just for fun rather than for fun and money.

P: From Roscoe, your choice of music doesn't seem to extend to David Bowie. Who do you like?

A: Actually, I'm a really big David Bowie fan and have been for about ten years. I know I put the book in a bit with the stuff in Roscoe Mowck, but that's more of a case of 'You always hurt the one you love' and so forth, than one of genuine spite. As for who else I like I'm afraid my tastes are boringly catholic. I really wish I was one of those firm and decisive people who wear sunglasses all the time and say "I don't listen to ANYTHING but Cuban Big Band music", but I'm far too wishy-washy for that sort of burning intensity of focus. Consequently, my list of fave musicians is the same old boring shopping list that anyone else's is. Since you asked however...

Tom Waits, Brian Eno, Early Roy Mafo, Velvet Underground, John Cale, Lou Reed, Nico, Iggy Pop, Dexus, Captain Beefheart, Early Mothers of Invention, Early Sex Pistols, The Clash, Talking Heads, Television, Early Patti Smith, the brilliant and obscure Lewis Purdy, Joni Mitchell, Edith Piaf, Reinhardt and Grapelli, Michael Hurley and the Holy Modal Rounders, Love, Country Joe and the Fish, Beatles, David J's new album, David Arken, Van Morrison, The Residents, Early Cream, some classical stuff like Satie, obscure electronic stuff like things by Pierre Henry and Andrew Lang, Stravinsky, Elvis Costello, Robert Wyatt, Early Twyla, Janis Joplin, Finboy Three, Madness, Thompson Twins, Eurythmics, Ian Dury, the woefully underrated Cockney Rebel, Eastwood and Saint, Lee Perry, Kok-a-Moon, Sunny Adams, The Cramps, Yacco, Sinister Ducks. Ahh, this is boring. Nobody wants to know this. Next question please.

Alan Moore got his real break in mainstream hero comics when Marvel UK took him on to do a few back-up features in their Star Wars and Doctor Who Monthlies.

The panel on the right is the splash panel from Star Wars Monthly 154 by the vastly under-rated John Stokes. It was completely different to any other material featured because it dealt with the SF elements of the Star Wars saga rather than the heroics. Below are panels from Star Wars Monthly 156 by Alan Davis. It is slightly over-written, like many of Alan's early work, but this is due more to the few pages the story had to fit into.



ALAN MOORE • JOHN STOKES • JERRY WHITE



Below are panels from Doctor Who Monthly 57, drawn by David Lloyd and featuring the Special Executive. As Alan got more work & became more confident, humour started to make his mark.



To the right is a panel from DWM 47, again by John Stokes. The story dealt with the background of The Doctor's ancestor's.





P: How do you think the whole idea of fascism should be handled, with respect to "V for Vendetta"?

A: Fascism, Um. Well, since you asked. The way I see things there are only two political theories worth considering. One is Anarchy, and the other is Fascism. Of course, in less than twenty words I've just totally dismissed two thousand years of political theory without so much as a by your leave, but, heck, that's just the xany kind of guy I am. Allow me to elaborate on this no-doubt misconceived slice of arrogance.

Irrespective of all the comparatively minor differences in policy that differentiate the various left and right wing parties, the only real fundamental question in politics is "Should we be ruled?" And there are only two answers.

One of the things that I've tried to do in V is to strip away all of the political and moral sophistifications from my subject matter and boil it all down to a very simple human phenomenon rather than a matter of endless waffle & debate. By getting inside the heads of the characters in the strips I've tried to show that Fascism and Anarchy are as much a matter of the emotions and spirit as they are matters of abstract intellect and politics. Maybe even more so. Also, I've tried to explain as honestly as I can what Fascism is all about. As an example, I refer you to a bit of Adam Susan's monologue in 'Versions', Warrior 5.

In his ramblings, Susan refers to the original symbol of Fascism being a bundle of bound twigs. This was of Roman origin and was meant to imply that whereas one twig would break, many would prevail through unity. The practical application of 'Strength Through Unity' is to set up an organization by which to bind all of your various twigs together. If Unity is the only source of strength, then, naturally, Unity must be enforced. By extension, uniformity must be enforced. A home must be established, and an economic/social/educational system must be developed that will turn out twigs of the correct shape and size. The justification of all this is straightforward survival, and I think it's pretty safe to assume that there have been moments in the past when a sense of organization had been necessary in order to permit the continued survival of the species. As far as it goes, the basic theory is not by any means insane.

Following on from the above definition of Fascism, and trying to use the word 'Fascism' without conjuring up the mad, bloody and loathsome uses that word has been used to cover, I think it's safe to say that any organization that requires that authority of one person or body over another is essentially fascist. That includes all political parties, all trade unions, most marriages, all relationships between Mothers & Fathers and Sons and Daughters, the I-Spy club, the Mafia, the Communist Party, The Women's Institute and the Justice League of America. Not bad, eh?

If the question is "Should we be ruled?", the only two possible answers are "yes" and "no". Unless of course you're with the S D P in which case there's a "maybe" as well. To answer "yes" is Fascism. To answer "no" is.

well, is what V for Vendetta is all about really. I'm trying to set up what I see as being one of the major unanswered problems and all-time Big Issues in terms of a fairly simple human conflict. By setting the strip in the Post-Holocaust Fascist Britain that we have done, I think we've been able to present the political and moral problems without any of the irrelevant ethical clutter that tends to confuse the story when you try to approach the problems in a contemporary setting. I suppose it's similar to the way in which you use algebra to approach a problem that you can't get at by conventional means. By setting the story where we have done, we've been able to reduce it to its unadorned components and make it simple enough to work within a comic strip format. At least, I hope that's what we've done.

On another level, we've tried to make the emotional level of the drama as complex as the plot itself. As I said earlier, Fascism and Anarchy are, to me, more emotional attitudes than political ones. I don't think you can examine the real issues properly unless you take a look at how it affects what goes on in people's heads. To do this, you have to be as impartial as you can manage, which is where my much vaunted woolly liberalism comes in handy. I've tried to put myself in the position of all the characters in the strip and to present them without explanation or judgement. Obviously, there is bound to be some bias there, but I've tried my best to correct for that wherever it occurs. Also, I'm limited by my ability as a writer. There is only so much that I can accurately imagine as going on in someone else's head. The rest is bound to be misrepresentation and lies, but I've tried to be as realistic and fair as possible.

Having established this set-up, the interpretation of it is up to the reader. All we're trying to do is to set the thing up in clearer and more direct terms so that the person reading it has a better chance of making an informed decision about the issues involved. And because they will hopefully be able to identify with the characters in the strip, the decision will hopefully be more human and less hypothetical. The way I see it, the whole point, reason & justification for V as a work of comic art will come at the point when the reader reaches a personal conclusion about the strip, and not at the point when somebody whips off V's mask or whatever else people hope is going to happen at the end.

I mean, yes, V is a mystery story on one level. It's almost a straightforward ~~detective~~ investigative adventure on another level. There is a basic unwinding of the mystery throughout the three volumes that make up the V trilogy, and there hopefully will be a satisfying revelation at the end. But as far as I'm concerned, the mystery is not who V is. The real 'Detective Story' is on another level entirely. It's an ethical ~~detective~~ investigative story, if you like, ~~the~~ an solution to it lies in the understanding of V and what he is doing.

I'm not going to answer any questions relating to V and his motives, because given all the crap that I've just poured out in the above paragraphs, it would be giving away a lot about the real "ending" of the story. Am I making sense, or did I forget to take my tablets this morning?

P: Because V says "no" to being ruled then the only alternative to the Fascist Government is famine, disease, a society dependent on violence, tribes being formed and land being fought over. Does V realize the consequences of his actions?

A: I will say that the choice between a fascist dictatorship and a chaotic tribal stone-age Britain does seem to be pretty accurate as you describe it, and it is only to be hoped that V has realised what he is doing. It all depends on how crazy he is, doesn't it?

P: But what are V's intentions?

A: Your best bet would probably be to pay careful attention to his actions and try to work them out for yourself. To some degree, the reader is intentionally in the same boat as Evee in the strip. She's faced with a series of actions that she can't really piece together and understand, and she must try and make some sense of them. Why did he sling her out? What was all that bit about the 'Faraway Tree'?

P: The identity of V is still unknown as of this writing. At the moment I'm sure it's not Roscoe Moscov. It could be Marvelman.

A: I'm prepared to say that you're definitely right about Roscoe Moscov.

P: Does the book 'V' by Thomas Pynchon exist, because there are references to it in 'V for Vendetta'?

A: It does actually exist, it's available in Picador, formerly in Penguin. I thought it was brilliant, and although it doesn't have much direct influence or relationship to 'V for Vendetta' I suppose that there are some parallels in that both concern themselves with the unravelling of a metaphysical mystery. Pynchon, of course, does it inestimably better than I do.

As for what the book is actually about, it concerns a number of things. Parts of it are about hero Benny Profane's adventures as an alligator hunter in the New York sewer system. Other parts concern a love affair between a priest and a rat named Veronica, but none of these are really what the book is about. The book is really about what young Stencil's father meant when he wrote those few cryptic lines that 'V' quotes in the relevant story. Like I say, I enjoyed it a lot, but I should warn anybody who intends to fork out the £15 plus cover price, that it's a very demanding book & it takes a while to get into it. It took me two attempts to actually read the thing from cover to cover, but once you've acquired the taste it's compulsive stuff and everything else seems a bit immaterial and lightweight by comparison. For anyone who's not read any Pynchon but would like to sound him out, I'd advise starting off with 'The Crying of Lot 49', working through 'V' and finishing with the monumental and brilliant 'Gravity's Rainbow'. Then go and have a lie down.

P: What influences culminated in the writing of 'V'? It seems like pieces of '1984', 'The Shadow' and 'The Prisoner' to me.

A: As far as influences on 'V' go, there's a partial list coming up in a Warrior feature during which I confess to all my many plagiarisms. '1984', 'The Shadow' and 'The Prisoner' are certainly three strong contenders, although it should be pointed out that '1984' isn't the only book about grim political futures on the market. Dystopian fiction is more or less a school in itself, within the SF mainstream. It includes novels as diverse as Burges's 'Clockwork Orange', Angus Wilson's 'Old Man at the Zoo', 'Brave New World', 'This Perfect Day' and countless others. This is without considering alternate world stories like Philip K Dick's 'Man in a High Castle' and Hilary Bailey's 'Fall of Frenchy Steiner'. As far as I'm concerned, 'V' is just a contribution to a well-established tradition, and I wouldn't want the Orwellian connection to seem too important. For one thing, my main objection to '1984' was that Orwell really avoided the disturbing heart of the matter. By presenting his totalitarian world as something that people are forced and terrorized into, he avoids mentioning the far more unpleasant truth. That people like to be controlled by ruthless authority figures. Until we can understand why that should be so, I don't think we've got much chance of avoiding real dictatorships when they happen to come our way.

Christ, that was boring wasn't it? I bet you wish you'd asked us if I was going to bump off Liz Moran or not. *

BITS AND PIECES

ON SKIZZ

I'm glad I had the nerve to attempt to make a ripped-off idea work, but it didn't and I don't want to ever do it again. I suppose that there's some things in the strip that I liked... the fact that it was fairly non-violent in a 2000 AD context, the fact that it managed to talk about different issues to those usually found in the comic, and so on, but on the whole I thought it was a disaster. I should also like to point out that there were small bits of editing in a number of episodes which didn't add either to the strip or my enjoyment of it, and that I certainly didn't write "No words, Skizz. Just... farewell!" in the last episode.

ON MARVELMAN

I wouldn't like to think that the readers were sitting around bored waiting for Kid Marvelman to turn up again. I've always seen Marvelman as a strip that should explore lots of angles on the superhero thing rather than just one, and I don't think the strip would be able to maintain the level of intensity in say, issues 5 & 6 for very long before it became boring and repetitive. Consequently, I've changed gear for a while. I don't want to flood the series with aliens and supervillains and other stuff straight away, because I want to keep Marvelman as real as possible for as long as possible. So, what I've done is to involve him in a storyline that is central to his origins as MM even though it doesn't contain much in the way of Giant Robots or Evil Mutants for him to smash.

I suppose the problem I have on the series is similar to something that Paul Neary once said. It was something along the lines of "Once you have the hero defeat a vastly powerful supervillain you have to bring out an even MORE powerful supervillain next issue, or the public lose interest." I didn't want to do that, chiefly because it's so bloody boring and usually leads to absurdities like Daxler fighting Galactus. Also, I didn't want to bring Kid Marvelman back for at least three years, mainly because I'm sick to the back teeth of picking up an issue of the X-Men and seeing Dark Phoenix on the cover, even though I know that it will be a hologram/imposter/dream/hoax/imaginary tale/robot. It's as if Chris Claremont had one really good idea and wants to play it over for the rest of his working life. I think MM deserves better than that.

What I wanted to do was start up a slow and gradual team-building, right in the background, so that when he does return it's going to be at least twice as good as the first battle, and it's going to be a very decisive one.



NEXT

WILLIAM GAUNT

WILLIAM GAUNT (who was one of the CHAMPIONS)

ARTICLE

SPIN-OFFS by Maureen James

THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN by Geoff Langrey

BOOKS

BATMAN as All-New adventure by Bambos Georgiou
THIRD another installment by Carl Critchlow

PLUS LOTS OF ART, ARTICLES AND OTHER STUFF !!



QUIET BURKE

THE COWBOY.



©1983 BY JOHN JACKSON.

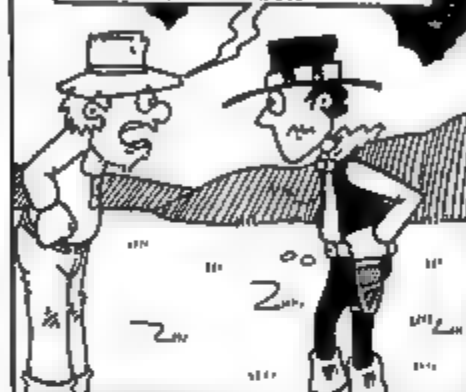
SHERIFF! SHERIFF!! BIG DUKE AND DOE EYES JUST GOT BROKE OUT OF JAIL WITH THE HELP OF FLAT NOSE CURRY ON A BIG HORSE.



WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?



BIG, BLACK, FOUR LEGS, A TAIL, A MANE. HOOVES...



MEANWHILE .

I COULD DO WITH SOMETHING TO EAT



WE'LL HAVE TO ROB SOMEONE DOE EYES

FLAT NOSE LEFT US WITH NOTHING WHILE HE WENT TO SEE HOW HIS MUM WAS.



WE'LL POUNCE ON THE FIRST GUY WHO PASSES. BUT FIRST WE NEED A DISGUISE, SOMETHING UTTERLY BRILLIANT. AH!! IVE GOT IT!!



TEE HE, HE'LL NEVER GUESS THAT I'M A TREE!!



OT OH, THE SHERIFFS COMING!! HE, HE, WE'LL ROB THE SHERIFF HA, HA, HA.



HA, HA, HA. I CAN JUST SEE HIS FACE ... WHEN HE GOES BACK TO TOWN ... HA, HA. AND PEOPLE SAY, "THERE'S THE SHERIFF, HE JUST GOT ROBBED." HA HA



HA! HA! HA! HA!



DAMN, IF I HADN'T LAUGHED OUT LOUD HE'D NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED.





DEBORAH WATLING

FROM INVISIBLE MAN TO NAUGHTY NORMA

There can be few actresses who can claim to have been friends with *The Invisible Man*, travelled around the universe with Doctor Who, been Alice in Wonderland, as well as Dorothy on her trip to see the Wizard of Oz and then become a blonde bombshell known as Naughty Norma in *Danger 538*. Actress Deborah Watling has been all of these in her twenty-six years in the acting profession. When we caught up with her, she was busy playing a frustrated French maid in Terence Rattigan's *French Without Tears*. At the outset, we would like to thank Deborah for taking the time out of her busy schedule to answer some questions about her various roles.

Geoffrey D. Cotterill

"I actually come from an acting family. My father is Jack Watling and he went into the business when he was eighteen. My sister Delye is an actress. I have a brother called Giles Watling who is an actor but he's gone into management a bit as well, and my little sister is an actress as well, but she's just produced a second grandchild so she's got her heads full at the moment."

"I went into acting very young, at two, and my first appearance on television was in a series called *The Invisible Man* (1954). That was a series for ATV, and it was extraordinary really. I played the young niece Sally."



Dr. Peter Brady (left) and *The Invisible Man*, does his good deed for the day by offering a young lady his helping, albeit invisible, hand (Notice the legs of a small man inside the hoodless shirt suit.)

At this point we showed Deborah a picture from the series (see above) and asked whether the child in the picture might possibly be her. The resultant laughter confirmed our suspicions. "Good grief, where did you get that from? It's me! I remember the frock as well. It was so funny because he had no head and it was just the framework. The man is underneath and his head is by the chest and of course sometimes he couldn't see where he was going. I had to steer him everywhere. It was very funny."

"At that time, I used to hate school. I went to a convent. I didn't like it, and I got this chance to appear on the TV and I thought 'Why not?' Mum and Daddy went through these traumatic things about whether it was good for me at two years old. Do you think she should do it? But it would be money for me that they could actually give me. With Dad being an actor, he was in and out of work. It was very difficult and so, they decided to let me have a go."

"I used to have a chaperone and tutor, you know, to teach me my lessons, about two or three hours a day. I got through three tutors. Two had nervous breakdowns! I was dreadful because I hated schooling and the program used to hide me in boxes and things. 'Where is she, it's time for her lesson', the tutor would ask. 'We don't know, Miss, we don't know at all', they'd reply."

"The *Invisible Man* was played by Tim Turner although he was never credited and it was supposed to be a mystery. He was a lovely man. It was his voice we heard and he used to walk through it as well (in rehearsals). But, then, there were these trick wires they had all over the set. They used to spend hours putting them up and you couldn't see them, because they were supposed to be invisible. Watling would then walk onto the set, not knowing that they were there and tear the whole lot down. I mean, I must of been popular. I did learn, mind you, quite quickly, and I enjoyed every minute of it."

"For *The Invisible Man*, we did about a year's worth of twenty-six episodes. It was one of the first film series. In the next studio they were doing *Willie Tell*. In fact, I did a bit in that as well. Oh, it was great fun, I loved it and it got me off school!"

"I then did *The Life of Elsie* for the BBC. That was with George Cole and I was playing Sarah Long. That was another year. Then my parents said, 'Well, enough is enough. Now catch up on your schooling'. So, I went back to school and I left when I was thirteen. I just had no interest at all. I loved the sporting side as well as the creative side, but academically, I was hopeless."

"After leaving school, I went straight onto the film as Alice (in *Wonderland*). We were the first of the Wednesday Plays with George Baker and Raelyn Crutcher. It was lovely. They filmed a lot around Oxford of course, on a punt, and then we went into the studio. It was all film actually, which was unusual for the BBC. After that I did one-off plays, *Chif Love*, *No Hiding Place*, *Stations and Ben* and some Scottish TV and then I did *Doctor Who*."

"Actually, I was seen for *Doctor Who* a year before I actually did it. I went to see the Producer, Innes Lloyd, and he said, 'Yes, Debbie, you'd be great as the girl in it but I think you ought to get more experience. How about coming back in a year's time?' So I thought 'fine' and forgot all about it until one day my agent rang up and said, 'Innes Lloyd has been on the phone and he wants you to do the girl in *Doctor Who* now'. I went, 'great, fine' and that was it."

"Victoria (Waterfield) was not timid. First of all she was, because if you're on Earth surrounded by monsters and kidnapped by Daleks, and you're a Victorian Miss, you'd have a heart."

attack really! You have to make it real, because if you don't believe it, the viewers won't believe it. So, I made her quite proper, but then gradually, as she got used to her situation and she got to know Jamie and The Doctor more, she became part of the family. Then she could do her own thing. She had her own personality but first of all, she was a Victorian Miss."

Deborah's father also had strong links with the programme at this time, appearing as Professor Travers in *The Abominable Snowman* and *The Web of Fear*. "I don't actually find it very easy to act with my father because I know him so well and he knows me, and he thinks really that I can do no wrong, you know what I mean? If I do something really bad, he says, 'Now come on, I don't think that quite works.' And I say, 'All right, Dad, what do you think?' And we work it out that way. Dad is positive but because he's my father it's a little difficult."

"On the *Doctor Who* set, however, I gained a nickname, that of 'leatherlungs', because Victoria screamed a lot of the time. By the end of my time, Victoria had turned into a nervous wreck! Totally!"

"After one year I felt that I had done enough. I had planned to go into the theatre and learn that side of the business. The producers wanted me to stay on and had, in fact, written me into more stories but I said 'no.'"

"I thought I'd got out in time but in fact I hadn't. I was out of work for about nine months. In that time, I thought that now I had some money, I should set up my own business, because as an actor you want some sort of security. It was just as the peak of the boutique boom was over. I opened a boutique and I logged my guts out. After about six or seven months it hadn't worked and I'd lost all my money. So, then I was offered the *Newcomers*. I thought, 'Watling, you're not a business woman, go back on the TV. So that was it.'"

"I did finally get onto the stage. I did a few tours and then I got the lead part in *The Wizard of Oz* in the West End at the Victoria Palace, which was really lovely. On the first night, I walked onto the stage and got a round of applause, because I got the part from 300 girls who were auditioning. I did the first scene and I knew that at any moment the spotlight was going to go on me, centre stage, and I had to walk down to the front. Everybody cleared and it was just me. You could hear a pin drop and I had to sing 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' and I thought I would die. I was so nervous. I thought 'well at least let me remember the words of the song!' But it was all right. I got used to it."

"In the early seventies I underwent a change of image because up until then I was always the girl in the gymslip and I couldn't get out of the school uniform. That was my image, the sweet, innocent little girl. Then I had the chance to play Sandra in *That'll Be The Day* and she was a real tart. I adored it because it was something completely different."

"We filmed it on the Isle of Wight. There was this wonderful moment before we started filming when David Puttnam rang up and said, 'Debbie, do you know how to jive?' and I said, 'Yes, vaguely.' He said, 'well, come to the dance centre tomorrow. There'll be three of you there and you're going to have some lessons.' So I walked into the dance centre to be confronted by David Essex and Ringo Starr. And I thought, 'Watling, you've made it!'"

"After acting with David Essex, I then went and starred with Cliff Richard in *Take Me High*. Lovely Cliff, he was marvellous. We filmed that one in Birmingham on the canals and I had to learn how to steer the boat. It was great fun. We did that for about three months, I did one number with him, a duet about Brumburgers! It was a different part to *That'll Be The Day*. For a start I was the sweet innocent girl again."

"I think it was going to be his big comeback in films, but it wasn't. It didn't work at all. It was a great pity because I had the leading lady part. It was 'Cliff Richard, Deborah Watling in *Take Me High* with Anthony Andrews'."

Speaking of Anthony Andrews led us not unnaturally to *Danger UXB* where the starring roles were reversed and Deborah played the legendary Naughty Norma. "She's one of my favourite characters actually because I didn't know what I was going to do with her really. I mean, she was a nymphomaniac, she comes from Clapham, she has to be blonde and she follows all the fashions in the 1940's magazines. So all of a sudden without my thinking, I develop this character. I was taken by John Hawkesworth, the producer and writer, to see the rushes after the first day's shooting. I was sitting there thinking that I hadn't got this character right at all but then I saw this woman walking about on that screen and I didn't know her it wasn't me at all. I saw this blonde, curvaceous bombshell, a cross between Marilyn Monroe and the young Diana Dore. She had this terrible Clapham accent and I thought THAT'S Naughty Norma. John leant over to me and said, 'That's incredible. That's her. You've done it.'"

Finally, we wondered whether there were any ambitions which Deborah still wanted to achieve. "I'd love to do more musicals. Other than that, I've always wanted to play Cleopatra."

"But she was dark, rather tall with dark eyes and I'm only five foot with medium brown hair and blue eyes. I somehow don't think it's going to work!"



The Owl's Effort 23 from Dick Damar.

24 A6 pgs for 50p. Sub 4 for £3.50 by post. Lots of interesting letters as usual, with the additional chuckles of the John Jackson and Lew Stringer pieces, making it very worthwhile indeed.



Burnt Stick 6 from Graham Cousins

28 A6 pgs for 35p. This special Christmas edition is as funny as all the other issues (which means it is very funny). The only problem is that it is not all Graham's own work. Besides this, worth getting.

Infinity 2 from Russell Willis.

24 A6 pgs plus A4 poster for 50p by post. Although interesting this issue consists of so many bits and bobs that you read it without realising you've done so. Could be worse.

Reverie 1 from David Cryo.

32 A6 pgs for 50p by post. Dave is distributing them in this country for the Australian publishers but as far as I'm concerned it's a dire strip-zine with hardly anything worthwhile in it's pages.

Albert The Mouse Graphic Novel from John Jackson.

18 A4 pgs plus card covers for 60p. Excellent stuff from John here. If he continues like this John will soon rival Lew Stringer's Brickman.

FANZINES

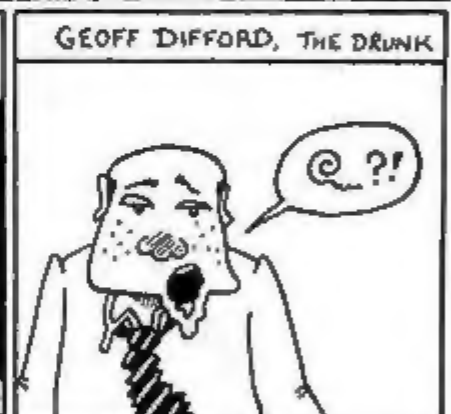
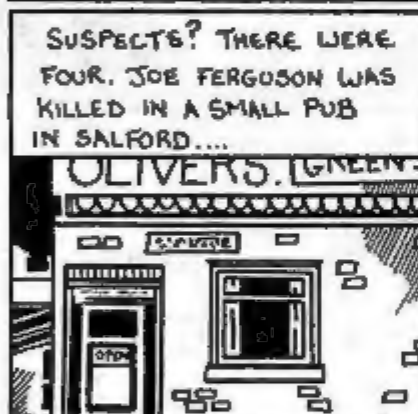
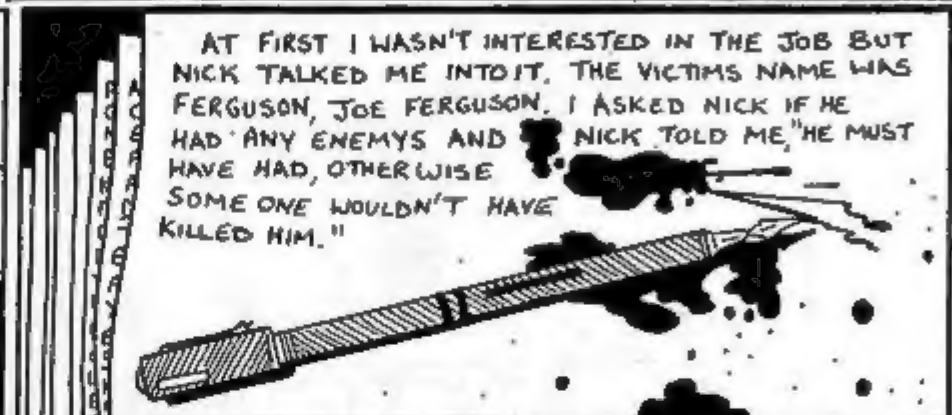
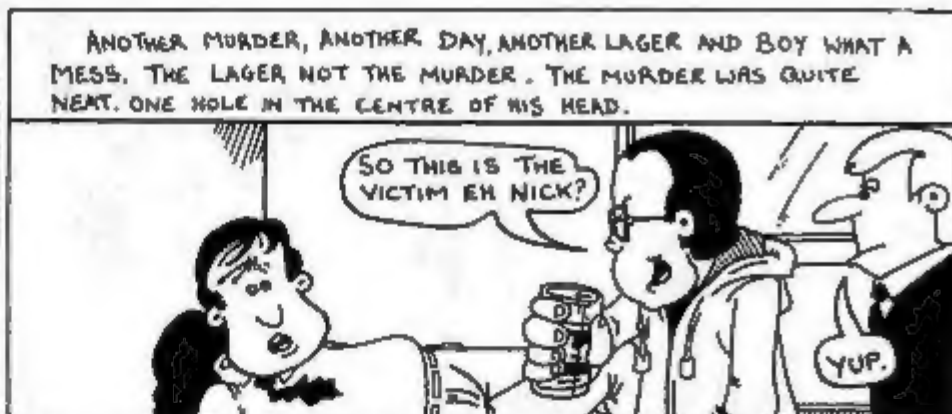
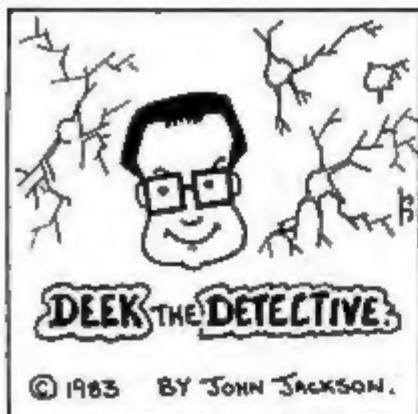
Brickman on Toast from Lew Stringer.

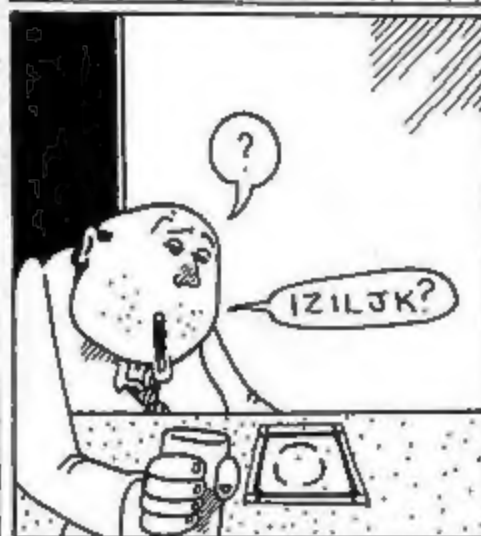
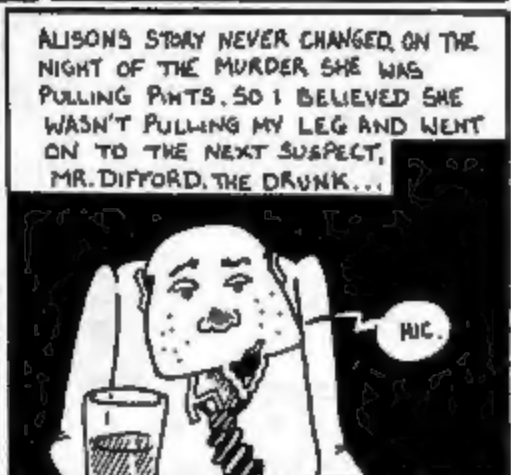
24 A6 pgs for 25p. Yep. This is still the funniest thing on the market, but for how long. Graham Cousins, John Jackson and Bambas Georgiou are hot on Lew's heels. I'm optimistic that the laughter will continue.

HACK AND WHITE 5 from Daniel Slingsby.

60(gulp) A6 pages for 50p. This has so many artists and contributors that I hardly know what to say or where to start. It's a mine devoted to comics and has stuff on V, Dan Dare, Moon Knight, Legion, Shadow, Judgement, Blackhawk, Ron, Brave and the Bold, Diddymen (no lie) and such much more. Fave bit is the Creature Feature where we actually get to see what other fans look like. A really interesting zine with lots for everybody.

That's all the reviews out of the way, though I've got more zines on my pile. They'll be reviewed in *Dilemma 3*, until then I wish you all the best of luck.





AFTER DIFFORD CAME CHRIS EDMUNDS, THE RIVAL PUB OWNER. I TRIED TO LOOK FOR MOTIVES AS TO WHY HE WOULD WANT TO KILL FERGY. IT SEEMED THAT IN THAT AREA OF SALFORD EDMUNDS PUB HAD HAD NO COMPETITION FOR YEARS. THEN FERGY MOVED CLOSE BY. SET UP THE "OLIVERS" PUB AND STOLE A LOT OF EDMUNDS CUSTOM. NOT TO MENTION HIS WIFE

EDMUNDS WAS A CRACK SHOT. HE EVEN SAW SOME ACTION IN THE FALKLANDS. COULD HE BE MY MAN? I ASKED HIM...

ER, EXCUSE ME.

YES?

ARE YOU MY MAN?

??

POW

AND STAY OUT FAIRY!

BOOT!

NO LUCK THERE AND I WAS DOWN TO MY LAST SUSPECT. BUDDY LUR. HIS ALIBI WAS THAT HE WAS IN BOLTON AT THE TIME OF THE KILLING WATCHING TV.

I WAS WAS!

IF YOU WERE WATCHING TV. WHAT WAS ON YOUR TV AT 10.30 THAT NIGHT?

FOOTBALL.

WRONG!! YOUR SISTER TOLD ME IT WAS A BOWL OF FRUIT AND THE TV'S INDOOR ARIEL.

SORRY BUD. BUT YOU'RE THE MURDERER.

BESIDES EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IN A MURDER MYSTERY THE "BUDLER" ALWAYS DID IT !!

END.

C.

